

## Editorial

For the last two hundred years polygamy has been a constant trouble spot for Protestant mission. When Christian mission has strictly enforced the biblical ideal of monogamous marriage by insisting that polygamous men put away all but one wife the result has been anything but what would be expected among the followers of a loving, compassionate God. For put away women have often been left destitute, and in their struggle to exist have ended up as prostitutes. Children from separated families have often ended up hating the God and religion that destroyed their families.

Perhaps it would be good to clearly state that no Seventh-day Adventist missiologist advocates or supports polygamy. God's ideal of monogamy is clearly outlined in Scripture. The challenge is how does the Christian church arrive at that ideal? What approach can or should be taken toward those who first hear the gospel while living with multiple wives? Polygamy is still practiced in many parts of the world, so how this question is answered will impact on how those unreached peoples view the God we serve.

This issue of the Journal of Adventist Mission Studies approaches the polygamy issue from several perspectives. Russell Staples looks at polygamy among people who have been resistant to the gospel largely because of deeply entrenched polygamy. Staples has also gathered many of the Adventist Church decisions over the past 100 years and placed them in several appendixes that should aid in understanding how Adventism has dealt with this issue. Roy Gane suggests biblical principles that should guide the Adventist Church in dealing with polygamy and the families involved. Stephan Höschle shares recent case studies from the Maasai in Tanzania that illustrate the challenges and obstacles polygamy poses for Adventism in East Africa. William Johnson writes on the topic from the perspective of the struggle of working between the biblical ideal and the actual cultural reality.

Jim Park continues his series of articles by looking at the impact of individualism in Western secular societies on discipleship and Christian community while Rudi Maier suggests a model for holistic development based on a case study from his time spent in Sri Lanka. Welcome to the first issue for our second year of publication. Join in the dialogue by letting us hear from you at [jams@andrews.edu](mailto:jams@andrews.edu)

Bruce L. Bauer, editor